

RECORD OF DECISION
for
SOUTH DAKOTA RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
and
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Prepared By:

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Miles City District, Montana
South Dakota Resource Area

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State Director
Montana State Office

RECORD OF DECISION
SOUTH DAKOTA RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

This document records the decisions reached by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for managing 280,672 surface acres of public land and 5,294,122 subsurface acres in the South Dakota Resource Area.

II. DECISION

The decision is hereby made to approve the proposed alternative in the attached plan as the resource management plan (RMP) for the South Dakota Resource Area. This plan was prepared under the regulations for implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 CFR 1600). An environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared for this plan in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. This approved plan is identical to the one set forth in the proposed plan and associated final environmental impact statement published November 1985, except for the following modifications:

- 1) Eliminate the following sentence on page 55.

"There would be no impacts on claimed locatable minerals, since lands with mining claims recorded under Section 314 of FLPMA may not be exchanged or sold."

Replace it with:

"There would be insignificant impacts on claimed locatable minerals, since lands with mining claims recorded under Section 314 of FLPMA are generally not exchanged or sold."

- 2) Eliminate the following paragraph on page 9.

"There would be no yearlong leases on M or I allotments. Grazing leases would define livestock numbers, class and seasons."

Replace it with:

"There would be no yearlong leases on M or I allotments. However, some pastures may be authorized for yearlong grazing if that level of use meets management objectives. Grazing leases would define livestock numbers, class and seasons."

Final plan decisions, terms and conditions are described in detail in Chapter Two of the final resource management plan. Those decisions have been extracted from the proposed plan and are summarized below.

A. Plan

1. Implementation

The actions outlined in the South Dakota RMP will be implemented over a period of 15 years or more.

2. Monitoring

The effects of implementation will be monitored and evaluated over the life of the plan. The general purposes of monitoring and evaluation will be:

- a. To determine if an action is meeting the objective for which it was designed;
- b. To identify unanticipated effects;
- c. To identify if changes in management actions are needed;
- d. To determine if mitigation measures are working as prescribed; and
- e. To provide for continuing comparison of plan benefits versus costs, regarding social, economic, and environmental issues.

The data collected from the monitoring and evaluation process will provide information regarding the effects of the management actions being taken.

3. Modification

If monitoring indicates that significant adverse impacts are occurring or that mitigation measures are not working as desired, management actions would be changed to accomplish objectives. If monitoring indicated that management actions are successfully meeting objectives, the level of monitoring would be reduced.

B. Vegetative Apportionment

1. Actions

Vegetation apportionment would be:

	Short Term (AUMs)	Long Term (AUMs)
Livestock	45,305	50,367
Rangeland Watershed and Wildlife Forage and Cover	116,103	127,808
TOTAL	161,408	178,175

(Refer to Appendix B1 and B2 of the final RMP for allotment specific apportionment actions.)

"There would be no yearlong leases on M or I allotments. However, some pastures may be authorized for yearlong grazing if that level of use meets management objectives. Grazing leases would define livestock numbers, class and seasons."

Fair condition ranges would be improved to good or better on 31,783 acres. About 1,663 acres of the fair condition range could be mechanically treated if they did not respond to grazing management. Tame pasture development could occur on 7,372 acres regardless of present condition (513 acres are in fair condition). Vegetation and erosion conditions would improve on 6,082 acres of fragile soils because management would be designed to mitigate the effects of livestock grazing during the wet season of the year. Grazing by livestock would be managed on 1,331 acres of riparian areas on seven allotments and vegetation conditions would approach climax in those areas and then level off and stagnate. Fencing and water developments could be required, in addition to the normal two miles of fence and eight water sources, to protect riparian areas. Prairie dog management and noxious weed control would occur as necessary.

2. Rationale

These actions most effectively resolve the planning questions of vegetation apportionment among livestock, watershed and wildlife and the effect of this apportionment on multiple-use resource management and allotment categorization. They also make full use of all planning criteria concerning this issue.

3. Monitoring

Monitoring efforts will focus on allotments in the improve category. The data provided by these studies will be used to evaluate stocking rates, to schedule pasture moves, to determine levels of forage competition, to detect changes in plant communities, and to identify patterns of forage use.

The monitoring intensity of an allotment will be determined by the nature and severity of the resource problems or conflicts that are present. No grazing adjustments would be made unless adequate monitoring indicated that an adjustment of livestock use would best resolve the resource problem.

Prior to the approval of all proposed range improvement projects, an interdisciplinary inspection would be done to evaluate the feasibility and impacts of the proposed developments. Recommendations and mitigations are discussed in the field to overcome problems that may exist. These considerations are then taken into account before final approval of the project is given.

C. Lands

1. Actions

a. Exchanges, Sales, Transfers and Recreational and Public Purposes

Over the long term (15 years), a total of 85,000 acres would be categorized for disposal. Jurisdictional transfers with other federal agencies and exchanges with the State of South Dakota would be considered on a case-by-case basis on up to 65,000 acres. On an annual basis, approximately 300 acres would be considered for sale and 1,000 acres would be considered for other exchanges.

The areas identified for disposal are outside the retention areas as shown on the final Resource Management Plan Map in the map pocket. Adjustments to the land pattern would be made on a case-by-case basis, which would include consideration of other resource values and the public interest being served and would be contingent upon a site specific analysis.

Decisions regarding sales and exchanges would include, but not be limited to, consideration of the following factors which are not all-inclusive, but represent major factors: habitat for threatened and endangered or sensitive species, riparian areas, fisheries, nesting/breeding habitat for animals, key big game seasonal habitat, developed recreation and recreational access sites, Class A scenery, areas of geologic/paleontological interest, mineral resources, rivers in the Nationwide Inventory, and sites eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Lands exchanged must be of equal value or the values be equalized by cash payment by either party not to exceed 25 percent of the appraised value of lands or interests in lands transferred out of federal ownership.

The types of land to be acquired by the Federal government through exchange would be:

- 1) Lands adjoining or surrounded by large tracts of public lands;
- 2) Lands which provide improved access to large tracts of public lands;
- 3) Lands which through consolidation would increase management efficiency;
- 4) Lands which would help meet other resource needs; and
- 5) Lands which would consolidate the mineral estate.

Sales of public land would be made only to qualified applicants in accordance with Section 203 of FLPMA at not less than the appraised fair market value. Lands identified for disposal in this plan do meet the following criteria:

- 1) Such tract, because of its location or other characteristics, is difficult and uneconomical to manage as part of the public lands, and is not suitable for management by another federal department or agency; or
- 2) Such tract was acquired for a specific purpose and the tract is no longer required for that or any other federal purpose; or
- 3) Disposal of such tract will serve important public objectives, including but not limited to, expansion of communities and economic development, which cannot be achieved prudently or feasibly on land other than public land and which outweigh other public objectives and values including, but not limited to, recreation and scenic values which would be served by maintaining such tract in federal ownership. In addition, disposal of such a surface tract would not unnecessarily interfere with development of the underlying federal mineral resource.

Jurisdictional transfers of federal lands to or from other agencies or federal departments may occur when:

- 1) The transfer would result in increased management efficiency and is no longer needed by that department or agency;
- 2) The transfer would result in decreased administrative costs to the federal government; and
- 3) The transfer would serve the public or national interest.

Disposals under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act would continue on a case-by-case basis. Conveyances under the R&PP Act would be made to qualified applicants (state, county, local governments and nonprofit organizations) on a case-by-case basis only after careful examination to assure that they would be in the public or national interest.

The mineral estate would be reserved to the United States in most land disposals, except as provided under Sections 206 and 209 of FLPMA. These sections state that mineral exchanges and sales could be considered on an individual basis when in the public interest or when the mineral values are shown to be absent or insignificant. Mineral exchanges would be considered either separately or in conjunction with the surface estate.

b. Unauthorized Use Abatement

Unauthorized uses of public land will be resolved either through termination, authorization by lease or permit, exchange or sale. Decisions will be based on consideration of the following criteria:

- the type and significance of improvements involved;
- conflicts with other resource values and uses, including potential values and uses; and
- whether the unauthorized use is intentional or unintentional.

New cases of unauthorized use generally will be terminated immediately. Temporary permits may be issued to provide short-term authorization, unless the situation warrants immediate cessation of the use and restoration of the land. Highest priority will be given to abatement of the following unauthorized uses:

- new unauthorized activities or uses where prompt action can minimize damage to public resources and associated costs;
- cases where delay may be detrimental to authorized users;
- cases involving special areas, sensitive ecosystems, and resources of national significance; and
- cases involving malicious or criminal activities.

c. Rights-of-Way

Currently rights-of-way are authorized under FLPMA, the Federal Highway Act, and the Minerals Leasing Act. Right-of-way applications will continue to be approved on a case-by-case basis. Most of the present rights-of-way applications are for new construction or the upgrading of existing facilities. Rights-of-way are issued under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 for activities associated with minerals development and under Title V of FLPMA for all other development. Applicants are encouraged to locate new facilities within existing rights-of-way where possible.

Currently, widths of certain rights-of-way such as pipelines, telephone and electric lines, and underground cables are being reduced to minimize rental costs and reduce surface disturbance. Additional width that may be necessary for the construction phase can be authorized by a temporary use permit.

d. Leases, Permits, and Easements

Legitimate uses of public land may be authorized on a case-by-case basis by permits, leases and easements.

Land use permits may be granted for a maximum of 3 years for uses that require no extensive improvements, construction, or surface disturbance.

Leases may be granted to authorize use of public lands for developments such as cultivation, small trade, or manufacturing concerns.

Easements may be authorized to assure that the use of public land, by the public, can be maintained and guaranteed if the land passes to private ownership. Easements may be used to protect cultural resources and threatened or endangered animal species on public and adjacent private land, if it is determined to be in the public interest.

2. Rationale

These actions best address the planning questions of public land ownership adjustment, increasing management efficiency, increasing public access and enhancing the ability to acquire lands with high public values. Under this theme, improved land ownership patterns would be achieved using exchange as the preferred method of land transaction, but also would allow sales as a method of disposal. Exchanges are preferred by the BLM and the public. Public land would largely remain under federal ownership.

3. Monitoring

Land tenure adjustment actions are monitored through the use of environmental assessments, which are written on every proposed action. In addition, a 45-day public comment period is required between the notification of a land disposal action and the actual disposal.

D. Other Resource Programs

The decision for the programs (including actions and, as appropriate, monitoring) described below is the continuation of current management. This alternative was selected as the proposed action because none of the programs arose as an "issue" during scoping.

1. Cultural Resources

The Bureau endeavors to manage cultural resources in a stewardship role for public benefit. This objective is accomplished, in part, through a use-evaluation system designed: (a) to analyze the scientific and sociocultural values of cultural resources; (b) to provide a basis for utilization of cultural resources; (c) to make cultural resources an important part of the planning system; and (d) to identify information needed when existing documentation of actual or potential use of individual sites or properties is not adequate. Uses of public cultural resources by qualified

institutions are authorized and monitored by BLM through a permit system. BLM will continue to investigate and prosecute unauthorized use or destruction of significant cultural properties.

Cultural resource management objectives are also accomplished, in part, through development of site or area specific activity plans which identify cultural resource use and protection objectives, establish actions which must be taken to achieve the objectives, and outline procedures for evaluating accomplishments.

Cultural resources will continue to be inventoried and evaluated to adequately consider the effects of proposed BLM actions on cultural properties which may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. This inventory and evaluation is routinely a part of project level planning and includes consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation per current regulations, policy, and memoranda of agreement. Cultural resources will be evaluated against the National Register criteria.

As time and funds permit, the BLM will continue to conduct inventories under the Cultural Resource Program to find and document cultural properties which qualify for the National Register. These later surveys will be directed toward areas where prior data indicate a possible need for active resource management to protect important sites. The BLM may also acquire scientifically or historically valuable sites through land exchanges, when such a goal is determined to be in the public interest.

2. Forestry

Forestry products such as firewood, posts, poles and timber are sold on an incidental basis. The forestry resource will continue to be managed at the present level.

3. Paleontological Resources

Paleontological resources currently are protected by clearance or review action on a case-by-case basis. Avoidance or mitigation of specimens is occasionally called for when there are surface disturbances. Management plans will be developed for significant properties requiring protection or stabilization. Monitoring and recording of specimen locations will continue.

4. Recreation

The Resource Area has much outdoor recreation potential and moderate demand for developed recreation sites. Management direction will continue to protect the potential recreation values. Recreation facilities consist of six fishing ponds, two creeks stocked with fish and two recreation areas that provide camping, picnicking, fishing and sightseeing. Recreation

facilities will continue to be maintained at a modest level. Access to more public land for future recreation potential is one of the long range lands goals.

All roads and designated trails in the Resource area are designated as open to off-road vehicle (ORV) use, except for areas in the Fort Meade Planning Unit. The Planning Unit was previously designated closed except for designated roads and trails. Restrictions or closures to ORV use may be established if future problems are identified. Due to extremely dry or wet conditions, the Area Manager may prohibit vehicular traffic on public land trails for short periods.

Visual resources will continue to be evaluated as a part of activity and project planning. This evaluation considers the significance of a proposed project and the visual sensitivity of the affected area. Stipulations are attached as appropriate to assure compatibility of projects with protection or enhancement of the visual resources.

5. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

There are no ACECs identified in the Resource Area. The inventory criteria for a potential ACEC are specified in 43 CFR 1610.7-2. Generally, an ACEC must possess a significant value, resource, system, process or hazard of more than local significance and special worth. If such areas are identified in the future, ACEC designation may be made.

6. Minerals

National policy is that private industry is encouraged to explore and develop federal minerals to satisfy national and local need. This policy provides for economically and environmentally sound exploration, extraction and reclamation practices.

Public lands are open and available for mineral exploration and development unless withdrawn or administratively restricted. Mineral development may occur along with other resource uses. Programs to obtain and evaluate current energy and mineral data are encouraged.

BLM mineral management is categorized into leasable, locatable, and saleable minerals. The leasable minerals, including coal and oil and gas, are administered under the Minerals Leasing Act of 1920. Rights to leasable minerals are acquired either by lease on application, by prospecting permit, or by competitive lease, except for coal which is leased competitively and licensed. Locatable mineral exploration and development on the Resource Area will continue to be administered through existing surface and mineral management regulations (43 CFR 3809 and 3800). The Resource Area will meet the demand for saleable resources through sales or free use permits on a case-by-case basis, as in the past.

The 1980 Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) of the BLM oil and gas leasing program in the Miles City District is the environmental policy document for oil and gas activity management in the Resource Area. Exploration and development on public lands will continue to be managed in accordance with this document. The BLM supervises oil and gas activities on federal minerals from seismic exploration and lease issuance through operations and abandonment. BLM also inspects oil and gas lease operations and evaluates geological, engineering, and economic aspects of drilling and production activity to ensure resource protection and proper collection of revenues.

7. Soils and Hydrology

Soil and water resources would continue to be evaluated as a part of project level planning. Such evaluations consider the significance of a proposed range improvement project and the sensitivity of soil and water resources. Stipulations would be attached as needed to protect adjacent resources. Soils would be managed to maintain productivity and minimize erosion.

Watershed resource monitoring will involve measuring soil erosion. Trends in streambank stability and water quality will be studied with respect to impacts from grazing, mining and forestry activities. Water quality would be monitored and maintained or improved within state and federal standards, and state agencies would be consulted on proposed projects that may significantly affect water quality.

8. Fire Management

The BLM's current management objectives are to take action on all new fires either on or threatening public lands. Fire suppression on public lands is carried out by the State of South Dakota, Division of Forestry and/or local volunteer fire departments in South Dakota.

No fires are allowed to burn unless addressed by an approved prescribed burn plan or modified suppression plan.

The prescribed fire program within the Resource Area has not been aggressively pursued in the past. There are some areas tentatively identified for prescribed burning. Prescribed burning could be used as an alternative to mechanical treatment.

9. Wildlife

Wildlife concerns would continue to be addressed in the potential activity plans developed for individual allotments; therefore, impacts from habitat disturbance or destruction would be minimal. Threatened and endangered species and their habitat will be given special consideration before any vegetation apportionment actions are taken.

Fences would be constructed utilizing standards outlined in BLM Manual 1737, which allow for movement of big game.

Any mechanical treatment and tame pasture conversion proposed on big sagebrush habitat, critical to antelope and sage grouse, would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to protect that resource. This would be accomplished in close consultation with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

Wildlife concerns would be addressed on a case-by-case basis early in the discussions of any land to be conveyed by sale, exchange or for Recreation and Public Purpose patents. Threatened and endangered species habitat would be given special consideration before any land transactions occur.

Wildlife monitoring will consist of temporary and permanent studies. They will monitor habitat condition and trend; forage availability, composition and vigor; changes in cover and habitat effectiveness; and habitat management objective accomplishment.

The management of wildlife habitat would include monitoring the condition of areas known to be of high value to wildlife and protecting valuable wildlife habitat in the development and implementation of activity plans.

III. CONSISTENCY

This plan is consistent with the plans, programs and policies of other Federal agencies and of State and local governments.

IV. ALTERNATIVES

A. Alternatives Analyzed in Detail

Five alternatives including the proposed plan were analyzed in detail. Alternatives are based on the management themes of: Alternative A, no action which is continuation of present management; Alternative B, extensive management of all resources; Alternative C, intensive management of resources with an emphasis on the range resource; and Alternative D, resource protection. The Proposed Alternative was structured to include certain aspects of vegetation apportionment from Alternatives A, B, C and D, and lands from Alternative B and C. A tabular description (Table 1) of the alternatives follows. Note that the alternatives did not vary for "Other Resource Programs". See II C for description of the five alternatives with respect to "Other Resource Programs".

B. Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail

The elimination of livestock grazing from the public lands was considered as an alternative under the vegetation apportionment issue. It was not analyzed in detail.

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES

Issue	Preferred Alternative		Alternative A	
	Vegetation apportionment would be:		Vegetation apportionment on M and I allotments:	
	Short Term (AUMs)	Long Term (AUMs)	Short Term (AUMs)	Long Term (AUMs)
Vegetation Apportionment				
Livestock	45,305	50,367	45,305	45,305
Rangeland Watershed and wildlife forage and cover	116,103	127,808	116,103	128,287
TOTAL	161,408	178,175	161,408	173,592

Management actions for the 68 M and I allotments have been selected from Alternative A for 16 allotments, from Alternative B for 11 allotments, from Alternative C for 33 allotments, and from Alternative D for seven allotments. Fair condition ranges would be improved to good or better on 31,783 acres. About 1,663 acres of the fair condition range could be mechanically treated if they did not respond to grazing management. Time pasture development could occur on 7,372 acres regardless of present condition (513 acres are in fair condition). Vegetation and erosion conditions would improve on 6,052 acres of fragile soils because management would be designed to mitigate the effects of livestock grazing during the wet season of the year. Grazing by livestock would be managed on 1,331 acres of riparian areas on seven allotments and vegetation conditions would approach climax in those areas and then level off and stagnate. Fencing and water developments could be required, in addition to the normal two miles of fence and eight water sources, to protect riparian areas. Prairie dog management and noxious weed control would occur as necessary; acres of occurrence on public lands are unknown.

Lands

Over the long term (15 years), a total of 65,000 acres would be categorized for disposal. Jurisdictional transfers with other federal agencies and exchanges with the State of South Dakota would be considered on a case-by-case basis on up to 65,000 acres. On an annual basis, approximately 300 acres would be considered for sale and 1,000 acres would be considered for other exchanges. Disposal under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act would continue on a case-by-case basis.

Adjustments to the land pattern would be made on a case-by-case basis. Over the long term, there would be an estimated 3,000 acres sold and 15,000 acres exchanged. Disposal under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act would continue on a case-by-case basis.

SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES

Issue	Alternative B		Alternative C		Alternative D	
	Vegetation apportionment on M and I allotments:		Vegetation apportionment on M and I allotments:		Vegetation apportionment on M and I allotments:	
	Short Term (AUMs)	Long Term (AUMs)	Short Term (AUMs)	Long Term (AUMs)	Short Term (AUMs)	Long Term (AUMs)
Vegetation Apportionment						
Livestock	45,305	42,934	45,305	57,512	45,305	53,189
Rangeland Watershed and wildlife forage and cover	116,103	128,802	116,103	130,257	116,103	137,468
TOTAL	161,408	171,736	161,408	187,769	161,408	190,657

There would be a total of 31,783 acres of fair condition range improved to good or better condition through grazing management and mechanical treatment. Two miles of fence and eight water sources would be constructed annually and those water sources having wildlife values would be fenced. About 1,666 acres of the fair condition range could be mechanically treated over the long term. Prairie dog management and noxious weed control would occur as necessary; acres of occurrence on public lands are unknown.

Over the long term (15 years), a total of 65,000 acres would be categorized for disposal. Jurisdictional transfers with other federal agencies and exchanges with the State of South Dakota would be considered on a case-by-case basis on up to 65,000 acres. On an annual basis, approximately 300 acres would be considered for sale and 1,000 acres would be considered for exchanges. Disposal under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act would continue on a case-by-case basis.

There would be a total of 31,783 acres of fair condition range improved to good or better condition through grazing management, mechanical treatment and time pasture development. Two miles of fence and eight water sources would be constructed annually and those water sources having wildlife values would be fenced. About 1,666 acres of the fair condition range could be mechanically treated and 8,115 acres could be converted to time pasture regardless of present condition (1,925 acres are in fair condition) over the long term. Prairie dog management and noxious weed control would occur as necessary; acres of occurrence on public lands are unknown.

Over the long term (15 years), a total of 65,000 acres would be categorized for disposal. Jurisdictional transfers with the State of South Dakota would be considered on a case-by-case basis on up to 65,000 acres over the long term. On an annual basis, approximately 300 acres would be considered for sale and 1,000 acres would be considered for other exchanges. Disposal under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act would continue on a case-by-case basis.

A total of 31,783 acres of fair range would be improved to good or better condition. Grazing by livestock would be managed on 1,331 acres of riparian areas and vegetation would approach climax in those areas and then level off and stagnate. Vegetation and erosion conditions would improve on 29,061 acres of fragile soils because management would be designed to mitigate the effects of livestock grazing during the wet season of the year. Fencing and water development would be required, in addition to the normal two miles of fence and eight water sources, to protect riparian and fragile soil areas. About 1,661 acres of the fair condition range could be mechanically treated and 6,725 acres of time pasture could be developed (1,466 acres are in fair condition). Prairie dog management and noxious weed control would occur as necessary; acres of occurrence on public lands are unknown.

Lands would be retained under existing ownership patterns. No sales or exchanges would take place. Recreation and Public Purposes Act requests would be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

C. The Proposed Alternative (the decision) is the Environmentally Preferred Alternative.

D. All practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the proposed action have been adopted.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A letter and brochure explaining our planning process and citing the counties and acreage of public lands involved in the RMP planning were mailed to about 2,000 addressees on June 18, 1982. The letter included a response card for return of comments and for an expression of and desire to remain on the mailing list for further RMP information.

An open house to invite public comment on the scope of the RMP was held on July 12, 1982, at the South Dakota Resource Area Office in Belle Fourche, South Dakota. Announcement of that meeting was made in newspapers and in the above-mentioned letter.

A call for coal resource information was made in the Federal Register, Volume 47, No. 166, August 26, 1982 and in letters to about 25 firms and individuals known to be interested in mineral resources.

An update brochure was sent to 765 addressees on May 24, 1983, summarizing the results of scoping and indicating our emphasis would be focused on classification of the public lands for adjustment and on vegetation management for livestock, wildlife and watershed protection.

The Draft RMP was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency on April 26, 1985. The notice of availability was published on April 24, 1985 in the Federal Register. This notice announced a 90-day comment period commencing on April 26 and ending on July 26, 1985.

The Draft RMP was mailed to about 460 addresses on our mailing list and to 439 grazing permittees. News releases provided information on how to obtain copies of the Draft. No public hearings were requested. A public meeting was held May 22, 1985 in Belle Fourche, South Dakota. A total of 16 comment letters were received.

As required by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (P.L. 93-205), the BLM consulted with the U.S.D.I. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The BLM submitted to the FWS a biological assessment for threatened and endangered species. The FWS concurred with BLM's conclusions as noted in comment letters No. 3 and 7 in the Resource Management Plan.

Official consultation with the Governor of South Dakota was accomplished following the public comment period. After the review of the public comments and the Draft RMP, the Governor provided comments from the State of South Dakota.

The FES was mailed to the updated mailing list (approximately 900) during the week of November 4 through 8.